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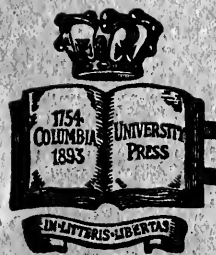
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History of the Services Rendered to  
the Public by the American Press  
During the Year 1917

By

Minna Lewinson and  
Henry Beetle Hough

Awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism  
Columbia University Commencement, 1918



New York

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

1918







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Pulitzer Prize in Journalism  
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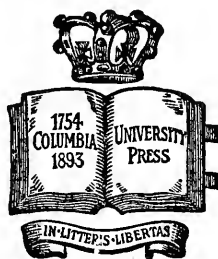
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## NOTE

In accordance with the provisions of the will of the late Joseph Pulitzer, the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism of \$1,000, for the best history of the services rendered to the public by the American press during the preceding year, was awarded at the 1918 Commencement of Columbia University to Minna Lewinson and Henry Beetle Hough, students in the School of Journalism, conjointly, for this essay. To both was awarded, at the same Commencement, the degree of Bachelor of Literature in Journalism.



## A History of the Services Rendered to the Public by the American Press During the Year 1917

1916 was a year of watchful waiting. It was a year of recurrent crises—crises faced but not solved. A feverish unrest pervaded every sphere of government, politics and industry. General business prosperity was coupled with general apprehension, and the feeling was broadcast that the country was living from hand to mouth.

The Presidential campaign, unsurpassed for excitement and uncertainty, was interrupted by news of ships sunk, foreign complications and border troubles. The spark of restiveness, fanned into flame by the thousand issues and problems of a political campaign, brought the country to the point of fire and made it suddenly aware that serious problems were confronting it.

For the newspapers, every one of these difficulties was intensified. All the judgment, all the balancing power which they possessed was called into play. Sharing with the country at large all the vexations of this period, yet alone understanding their significance, it was the task of the press to sound each apparent crisis as it came up. The newspaper was to play an active part in bringing about the adjustment of the nation to an entirely new set of conditions.

All this time the press was handicapped by problems peculiar to itself. The scarcity of paper, which had begun with the war, became more and more serious. When

paper could be obtained at all, it was only at the most exorbitant prices. This introduced the deadening necessity for retrenchment. The prospect for the coming year was far from encouraging. Mr. A. G. McIntyre of the A. N. P. A. prophesied that the newspapers would lose ten million dollars in spite of rigid economies, and that the efficient service of the press would be impaired. All costs of operation climbed steadily. The very question of existence became an added uncertainty for the press.

But with 1917 uncertainty gave way to the realization of definite things to be accomplished. All the befogging difficulties of the previous year cleared away before a national singleness of purpose. Hesitation had vanished. The need for each successive step found the country ready. With a suddenness which startled the world, the United States swung from inaction into action. In the accomplishment of this transition the dominant influence was that of the American press.

Almost at the beginning of the new year, Germany's note declaring unrestricted U-boat warfare broke the conditions of 1916. Discussion and preachment had prepared the public mind to understand the significance of such a declaration; now the newspapers urged or demanded definite courses of action. The breaking off of relations with the Imperial German Government was a direct result of public will made intelligible by and in the newspapers.

This was recognized at the time of its occurrence by the *"Editor and Publisher"* whose appraisal is made weighty by its intimate contact with the press of the nation.

This magazine said on February 10, "In the intervening days (between the arrival of the German note and the break of relations) the newspapers of the country had voiced the popular sentiment with unerring accuracy. They had interpreted the will and temper of Americans.

A sorely-tried Chief Executive need have sought no further than the editorial pages of the newspapers for evidence of the full approval of the American people of the momentous step taken last Saturday. The editors of the country, in demanding an immediate severance of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany, spoke from no motives of personal bias or prejudice. They merely voiced the grim decision of a people whose patience and forbearance had been tried beyond the uttermost limits."

Even those newspapers which had been pacifistic, still retaining their desire and hope for peace, exerted their full influence in support of the President. Those who classed the Hearst newspapers as disloyal recognized their nation-wide stand on the side of action.

On January 20, the San Francisco *Chronicle*, one of many other energetic propagandists for peace, said, "The path of victory can never lead to permanently harmonious relations." After the break, it simply said, "We can rely on the President."

Throughout the country there was a marked absence of jingoism. The press advocated action against Germany not because of belligerency, but because it was the irreducible minimum for the United States under the circumstances. No such furor of patriotism was aroused as at the time of the Spanish-American War, but there was instead a sober appeal to reason and to loyalty. Carefully avoiding a headlong rush toward hostilities, the newspapers awakened the people to a sense of their responsibilities and prepared them for action when the time should come. The step was accomplished deliberately and temperately, not with blind impulsiveness. Such established newspapers as the New York *Times*, the Chicago *Tribune*, and the Kansas City *Star*, as well as the smallest country

weeklies, devoted their entire energies to putting before the people all sides of the great issue.

With the same restraint, the press withheld judgment during the trying months when the sinking of any ship might have been construed as the overt act for which an anxious nation was waiting. Far from being united in a mad scramble for war, editorial opinion was divided as to the wisdom of armed neutrality. Nevertheless, when the Administration had decided upon this course, a united press joined with it in condemning the "small group of wilful men" who attempted to block the Armed Ship Bill.

Absolute impartiality and freedom from bias marked practically every editorial page in the country. It was through the news columns that the public was kept informed, and from full knowledge of the facts was forced to final decision.

With the declaration of war, the nation and the press were galvanized into concerted action. Those who had steadfastly held to the hope of peace, flung themselves wholeheartedly into the efficient waging of war. Both the Administration and the public relied upon the newspaper—the one for cooperation, the other for its very contact with current affairs.

Severely tested in this crisis, the response from German-American publications showed a gratifying loyalty. No matter what the cost, they came unflinchingly to the support of the United States. From the time of the break, the course which they would take was clear. The "*Editor and Publisher*" said of them, "The newspapers printed in the German language in the United States, all of them 'Pro-German' when the German Empire's interests had to be weighed against the interests of the nations at war with her, have rallied to the American cause with gratifying unanimity in the present crisis."

From the editorial pages of German-American dailies came such stirring response as this from the St. Louis *Westliche Post*: "We are bound to Germany by blood, to America by free will. A heavy sacrifice is demanded and it will be given." The Omaha *Tribune* said: "Our allegiance belongs to America first, last and all the time. These duties we must perform above all considerations and regardless of what the future may have in store for us."

Like sentiments were expressed with varying emphasis by such representative journals as the San Francisco *Demokrat*, the New York *Staats-Zeitung*, the Milwaukee *Germania Herold*, and the Cincinnati *Volksblatt*. One of the strongest German papers in the West, the Colorado *Herold*, whose editor was President of the Colorado German-American Alliance with more than 40,000 members, came unequivocally to the support of America in the war.

War brought the press of the nation face to face with its greatest problem. The facts of history in the making must be brought before the public; at the same time there must not be the slightest embarrassment to the country in the conduct of war. Together with the unprecedented need for publicity and discussion came also the unprecedented need for many specific concealments and for suppression of ill-timed sentiments.

Everyone expected a censorship. The government took immediate steps in this direction, and shortly after the outbreak of war the Committee on Public Information was constituted. But the only real censorship was that which the press voluntarily exercised from the very first day. The execution of President Wilson's principles came from city rooms all over the country and not from an office in Washington. By no stretch of the imagination could this execution have been so immediate and so complete under

any committee as it was under the loyal cooperation of the nation's editors.

In the field of magazine and other publicity, this agency justified its existence, but in its relationship with the press it was practically useless. Intended as directing force of the censorship, it was not even of assistance to the newspapers in their work.

On the very day of the declaration of war came the first instance of the voluntary suppression of military news. At 2:30 a. m., with the plates for its first edition already on the presses, the Milwaukee *Free Press* received a flash: "Editors—Kill army bill story by order of censor." There were only two things to do—either to ignore the request from Washington or to chisel the stereotyped plate. It is a question whether the article really should have been withheld from the public. It was probably legitimate news of the day, containing the first outline of the plan for conscription. That all newspapers could be reached in time to stop the story was improbable. Yet, with unquestioning respect for the order, the *Free Press* chose to use the chisel. Thousands of copies went out with half a column on the front page a meaningless mass of hieroglyphics.

A story apparently showing the existence of an extensive German spy system throughout the country was sent out by the Associated Press the first of August. The arrest of several agents was made to seem the first of a series of sensational developments. This story, on the authority of United States officials, was easily the best news of the day. But a little later editors were informed that Washington considered the dispatch exaggeration and requested that it be killed. Without more ado the newspapers complied. The story never appeared.

Most signal among the triumphs of voluntary censorship was that by which movements of American troops



were protected by absolute secrecy, and yet every tiding of their welfare given the fullest publicity. In the prompt publication of the disasters to the "Antilles," the "Jacob Jones" and the "Finland," the press and the public has fulfillment of Secretary Daniels' spoken promise that there should be no concealment of unfavorable or tragic news. Thus the Government has reciprocated the cooperation of the newspaper, and made easy its twofold task. For although it is the business of a free press to give the people the news, it is also its business to refrain from doing anything that might even tend to hinder the government's war program.

Untold numbers of American troops are now in France. For many months American generals have been conducting operations on European soil. Were it not for the voluntary care of the editors of the nation, these troops and these generals, deprived of their most effective safeguard against the enemy U-boats—secrecy—might never have reached their destination. It is impossible to exaggerate the service thus performed.

First went General Pershing with his expeditionary force. Although the time of his going was known to every news-gathering agency, yet the first news printed was that of his safe arrival. Since that time many camps have been vacated in unbroken silence, so surely have the city rooms of the country kept faith. They knew when the Rainbow Division left, yet that information was kept within their walls until the division had safely landed. The news of the departure of an American fleet of destroyers was not published until several days after the safe arrival of the expedition in a British port.

Diplomatic missions to and from this country have been safeguarded with the same scrupulous zeal. The first intimation the country had of our purpose to send repre-

sentatives to the Allied War Conference was the appearance of Col. House and his associates in England. When the American public learned that Papa Joffre was to visit them, he was already on a train for New York, with his distinguished colleagues, Viviani and Balfour. The English and French commissioners were followed by envoys from Japan, Italy and Serbia. In each case the guests were guarded by a circumspect press.

In applying the voluntary censorship, the newspapers made over entirely one of the most important news departments. With curtailed notices of transatlantic sailings, the term "An Atlantic Port" has come into general use, and the indefinite has superseded the definite. The greatest care is taken to avoid any details that might endanger trade.

When military disaster overtook the Italian army, King Victor Emmanuel declared for a policy of peace, and it was only the drastic intervention of his ministers that kept Italy in the war. These facts were current in the newspaper offices here, but in none were they printed. Inasmuch as Italy did stand by her allies, the publication of such a piece of news would have done no good, and would only have made the task of winning the war more arduous.

Long before the voluntary censorship became a problem, the press of the country was preparing the public mind for the selective service law. Against a background of discussion of compulsory military training, continuing since 1914, came, with the entrance of the United States into the war, a positive and persistent demand for a democratic army system. Notwithstanding the drafts of the Civil War, the idea of conscription was foreign and repulsive to the American people. By no sudden or jingoistic plea was this feeling overcome, but by a long-continued and unbiased discussion. Through the columns of their

newspapers Americans were made to realize that conscription was in accord with those principles of democracy for which they had stood in the past, and for which they were about to fight.

An example of the energetic backing which the draft law received while it was still before Congress was that of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. This journal conducted a thorough-going canvass of seventy-five Missouri communities, and demonstrated that they were five to one in favor of conscription. It also polled the press of that state, and found general support of the measure. The *Post-Dispatch* also led Speaker Champ Clark's home state in a repudiation of his anticonscription policy. The same thing was done on a smaller scale by the New York *World*, which, when the question was uppermost, sent its reporters broadcast over New York City, and showed a powerful endorsement of compulsory military service.

When the conscription law was finally passed, the newspapers were of the greatest assistance in getting the machinery in smooth running order. The press acted as a unit in printing reproductions of the registration blanks, and full explanations as to how they should be filled out. The fact that registration was successful beyond all expectation was due almost entirely to this educational publicity.

This was the first actual interference of the federal government in the life of the individual citizen. How necessary was some correlating agency was not appreciated until the press had voluntarily risen to the emergency. So uniformly alive were the editors to the responsibilities thus assumed that there was no confusion. The man who ventured into the most rural districts, the man thousands of miles away from home, the man who was traveling constantly—each was as closely in touch with his own

situation as if he had been at home. In a crucial situation, totally unprecedented, the newspaper supplied the link without which it now seems as if the registration must have been a failure.

In rounding up the small minority who wilfully failed to register, many active dailies were of great service to the government. A striking instance of this was the effective use to which Federal authorities put the registration lists published in full in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. The co-operation of the entire community was thus secured, as it could have been in no other way.

Then came the lottery. In itself a gigantic task, it was made even more difficult by the precipitate shifting of plans twice in succession. The newspapers, having carefully made their plans for the handling of the figures, were forced to change them at the last minute. The uncertainty as to the hour at which the drawing would take place made it necessary for every newspaper office to keep regular and extra staff available at a moment's notice. When at last the figures began to come, the wires were cleared of all other matter, and no newspaper resource or energy was spared in the effort to get the drawings before the public as quickly and accurately as possible.

On Saturday, July 21, practically every morning newspaper throughout the country gave to its readers the complete list of the numbers drawn at Washington with the corresponding serial numbers, so that every one who had registered could easily find his place in the draft. Already, while the drawing was still in progress, the evening papers of the night before had published the lists of those who would first be called. The biggest news story in the history of the country had been handled with superlative efficiency in time and accuracy.

Additional handicaps under which some of the offices labored made their achievements the greater. Delay of the Massachusetts authorities in issuing the serial numbers actually doubled the task in that state. When the numbers drawn at Washington began to arrive, there were no key-lists by which to find the names. Only by dint of expensive telegraph and telephone communication with Boston were the evening editions able to keep up with those of other states. Long-time rivalries were forgotten in a general pooling of resources in a work of public spirit.

Several of the largest Chicago dailies joined forces in making the list as complete and as immune from error as possible. To deal with the vast number of figures incidental to the size of that city they hired a large extra clerical force and established a central headquarters. So adequate were the tables printed in the New York papers that they were used by exemption boards in widely distant places pending the arrival of the master-lists.

On the evening of July 20, the very day of the drawing, the *Kansas City Star* published seventeen columns of names and also numbers as far as they had been drawn. The diagrammatic key printed in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, by the application of which a man could find not only how he stood in the draft, but his liability in his own district, was highly praised by the exemption boards of the vicinity. On the Pacific Coast the handling of the *San Francisco Examiner* was noteworthy. It published, on July 21, double the quota of names by districts.

"Believing it to be a patriotic duty," the *Birmingham Age-Herald* published several days before the drawing the registration lists with the red-ink numbers, thus enabling the registrants to find their standing as their numbers appeared. Another Southern paper, the *Florida Times-Union*, carried in its columns the full list of names and

addresses of those to be examined, before the notices were mailed. As soon as the official master-lists came from Washington, they were reproduced by photography in the *Minneapolis Journal* to make certain absolute accuracy. These are only a few of the most conspicuous examples of how the American press, in the face of tremendous difficulties, gave the vital information to an anxious public.

In the days that followed, while the exemption boards were struggling to adjust themselves to a situation of irritation and chaos, they incurred an enormous debt to the newspapers. The value of the space freely given to the many columns of names issued by the boards, their announcements and the chronicles of their activities would aggregate millions of dollars. Their task in making difficult decisions was facilitated by the wide publicity furnished at every turn.

This service continued as a matter of routine until the first call to the draft camps came on the first of September. Then there was added to it the complex duty of keeping the public in touch with conditions at the cantonments. Those whose brothers, husbands and sweethearts had gone were eager for information regarding their welfare. With all the care and detail of regular war correspondence, the cities were in close touch with the camps.

A national responsibility for moral conditions surrounding the citizen army was assumed by the press, which set on foot a general and far-reaching clean-up campaign. On the Pacific Coast the big cities of Seattle, Portland, Tacoma and others, all accessible from Camp Lewis, carried through sweeping reforms, in which the newspapers took active part. In every large city near a draft camp similar energetic movements took place. The same close scrutiny was extended to the regular army camps.

In the whole matter of keeping a watchful eye over the clothing and provisioning of both drafted and enlisted men the real initiative was that of the American editor. Not only were both sides of the Congressional ordnance inquiry faithfully presented, but the peculiar needs of each camp were given to the public as they were revealed. It was through this agency that the public was enabled to keep abreast with the development of its national army system. As the year ended many important improvements were contemplated as a result of this activity.

By pointing out the injustices in the old draft system the press opened up the way for complete revision in the second call. All the services rendered the nation in the summer were repeated in extra measure in the winter. The involved questionnaire multiplied the difficulties of the individual registrant, and made the necessity for detailed explanation much more pressing.

In his annual report Secretary of War Baker names three elements to which he attributes the success of the draft. Second only to the executive officials themselves and the cooperation of the states he places the American press. Other administrative heads have given the newspaper an even higher rank. With an unprecedented undertaking carried through in 1917, it is certain to perform an invaluable service in whatever drafts the future may bring.

No less generous was the response to the demands of the Liberty Loan, which, in contrast to the enormous complexity of the service in connection with the draft, was a blunt question of direct financial sacrifice. The value of the advertising freely contributed mounted into the billions for each campaign. Moreover, it was a kind of publicity that no private agency or corporation, however wealthy, could have obtained. Not only was it far-

reaching, but it had behind it all the power and goodwill of the press. In spite of the fact that the Government was spending large sums on billboards and other forms of advertising, the newspapers, by far the most effective force, were not paid.

But although the services in connection with the first loan were great, they were redoubled with the second. A study of news columns during the first campaign shows that Liberty Loan stories in surprising numbers were kept upon the front page. During the second campaign they were given more space and even more conspicuously featured. After the second loan had been over-subscribed, Benjamin Strong, Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, wrote to the newspapers of that district expressing his appreciation of their work.

"You undoubtedly realize," he said, "that these great Government loans can only be placed by creating a public opinion which is irresistible, and that the function of the reserve bank organization is only to gather the crop when it matures, the preliminary planting and cultivation being, in fact, the publicity upon which we must rely for success.

"The newspapers of this city by their influence and support have contributed to this result far beyond what was done at the time of the first loan, beyond what any of us expected would be possible, and they are certainly entitled to the gratitude of the people of this district and of the country."

Throughout the nation the directors of the drive have expressed their gratitude in language just as strong. At the end of the year Secretary McAdoo sent this message to the editors and publishers of the nation:

It would be impossible to exaggerate the value of the service rendered by the editors and publishers of the United States in the



two recent Liberty Loan campaigns and in the War Savings Stamp campaign now in progress. The support given by the press was as broad in scope as it was patriotic in purpose. Rural weeklies, metropolitan dailies, story leaflets and powerful magazines alike contributed most generous service to the great cause in which America fights. Without their most valuable assistance the vital financial operations of the government could not have been successful.

In two other great campaigns the press lent its columns to a humanitarian purpose. Each time the Red Cross undertook a nation-wide membership drive, the greatest success was made possible only by the free publicity and helpful cooperation of the city rooms. Because of this cooperation the campaign expenses of the Red Cross have been so cut that, unlike other relief organizations, it has been able to devote its entire income to the purpose for which it was collected. The newspapers have been the mouthpiece of the Red Cross, bringing home to their readers the worthiness of its cause and the greatness of its need. Not yet can the significance of this service be appreciated. It will be felt more as time goes on.

More immediate was the service performed by what was practically a partnership with Mr. Hoover. Not only was the press responsible for the public demand for his appointment, but it was indispensable in carrying on his work. It not only popularized the phrase "to Hooverize," but popularized the act as well.

In all kinds of diverse ways it made conservation an integral part of American life. All over the country cook books and instructions for home gardening were distributed with the evening paper. Every woman's page from coast to coast carried war menus and canning hints. Economy was unceasingly urged and practical means of accomplishing it presented. It was the peculiar function of this service to inculcate the most radical form of thrift,

and yet to preserve the popular balance so as to forestall hoarding. It is difficult to estimate the value of this work, but without it the assumption is safe that there might have been a more desperate crisis in the food supply of America and her allies.

The same is true of the Fuel Administration under Mr. Garfield, which, with the aid of the newspapers, tided the country over hardships which became extreme at the end of the year. This aid made successful the experiment of saving coal by lightless nights. In many instances where individuals or corporations failed to observe the order, the power of publicity forced them into line.

Not content with lending the full weight of its support to the Government, the press took the initiative in the hunting down of sedition and Pro-Germanism. Through zeal for the country's welfare newspapers even ran the risk of libel suits, such as that brought by Mayor Thompson of Chicago against the Chicago *Tribune*.

Among the outstanding features in the New York newspapers were the Alien Enemy columns in the *Herald* and the "Who's Who against America" in the *Tribune*. Both of these, one a list, the other a series of articles, attempted to expose as much as possible all forms of German propaganda. These are a few examples of the forms which the energies of the American press took along such lines.

Not content with exposing sedition, the newspapers urged citizens to enlist in the war. The same liberality of space, the same sustained effort and the same remarkable results as characterized the Liberty Loan and Red Cross campaigns were again in evidence. When Secretary Daniels wanted to get the President's call for men for the Navy direct to the people, he did not confer with the bill-posters and car card men. He asked the newspapers to

print his appeal on the front page. The results of this kind of recruiting were recognized in the tribute paid the newspapers by Major W. H. Parker in charge of Marine Corps recruiting. In a letter sent to the editors of the country he said:

Please let me take this occasion to thank you folks for pitching in and making possible the wonderful recruiting work we have been able to perform during the year just closing. You rolled up your sleeves—threw wide open your columns—we filled our ranks with the highest type of recruits.

Another way in which the press helped both the Government and the public was in unraveling the complexities of the new war tax system. Had not wide publicity accustomed the people to the strangeness and intricacies of its provisions, a tremendous loss of efficiency might have resulted. The postal system would have been clogged. The theater box offices would have seethed with angry mobs. There would have been endless conflict with every railroad ticket sold. The collection of these new taxes, which face each individual at every turn, and on which he must be fully informed, was made possible speedily and without friction through the agency of the news columns.

Not the only inconvenience with which the traveler had to put up was the railroad tax. General curtailment of passenger service has been accomplished with a minimum of discontent. The traveling public has acquiesced while the Government practically monopolized the rails for the shipment of freight. Utterly unprecedented, such a thing could not have happened without the loyalty of a united press.

As never before, the United States was brought face to face this year with the fact that labor is the force that makes the world go 'round. To some extent every city and town felt an unrest inevitable with the re-adjustments

of war conditions. So far as actual efficiency is concerned, the greatest problem of a country at war is to maintain the maximum speed and output and make fullest use of its resources, and at the same time to be fair to the laborer in the matter of hours and wages.

The beginning of August the lumber men of Washington struck for an eight-hour day, and tied up the lumber industry of that state, which was essential to the supply of spruce for America's great airplane project. In September the wooden shipbuilders and later the metal shipbuilders walked out in sympathetic strike and left the greater part of the country's new tonnage incomplete on the ways of Seattle. During the long period of attempting to adjust the difficulties the newspapers were the one cool and stabilizing influence. Their sane and impartial attitude is typified by the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, which said:

We are in war, and must give our whole-hearted energy and devotion to our country, but meanwhile we should take time to be fair and just to the men who labor at home to sustain the soldiers in the field.

Settlement was finally achieved by a uniform wage scale prepared by the Federal Shipbuilding and Labor Adjustment Board. Although this imposed reductions in some cases, it was accepted by the men, who had come to realize, as that same paper pointed out, that the shipyard owners were, for the duration of the war, merely agents of the government, and that a strike would be a strike against federal authority. Upon that representation came industrial peace after an entire summer of turmoil, in which practically every national executive, including President Wilson, Secretary Baker and Secretary McAdoo, had pleaded in vain.

A new element was introduced in the terrible race riots in East St. Louis, fundamentally economic and industrial in their origin. Here the press had a different sort of problem to deal with, and it was unanimous in its demands that no such outrage be permitted to occur again. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* at once struck the keynote of the situation when it said:

Should the influx of negroes accentuate race prejudice and create at the North some of the evils heretofore distinctive to the South, a duty is imposed on the North to combat them much more effectively than the South has combatted them. A rioter declared Monday night that "There is no law against violence" in some cases. Perpetrators of race outrages should be made to know that there is such a law, and that it will be drastically applied.

This and other dailies scrutinized the local inquiries and demanded Congressional action. They did not rest until the offenders were punished and there was a promise of better industrial conditions.

The race and labor riots of Flat River were a logical continuation of the riots in East St. Louis. White workers of foreign nationality and speech were hunted down by the Flat River mob. From the press came the demand that the Missouri authorities take immediate and vigorous action. That harmony was restored and that work went on as before was a direct result of this demand.

In other labor troubles the element of disloyalty complicated matters. But no talk of German pay and German propaganda kept the American press from being fair even to the extremists of the I. W. W. movement. In August a host of striking miners was expelled from Bisbee, Arizona. Officials of the Phelps-Dodge Corporation took the law into their own hands and imposed an absolute news censorship, seizing all telegraph lines. Not until the

Associated Press broke through this illicit censorship did the country know the truth about the Arizona affair, and that the miners were not all German hirelings. The autocratic attempt of these officials which would have worked a national injustice was exposed, and their punishment brought about, by the news service.

On the other hand, wherever the I. W. W. proved itself a disturbing and disloyal force, the press was largely instrumental in bringing the offenders to justice. The newspaper was the greatest influence in weeding out the undesirable labor elements, and in upholding the desirable ones.

Whether or not Thomas J. Mooney was guilty of murder in the bomb outrage on the San Francisco preparedness parade cannot yet be clear. Whatever the outcome may be, the press of the country performed a great service by emphatically calling attention to the grave doubts in the situation.

Another national question, in which constructive publicity was necessary as an intermediary between the people and Congress, was that of prohibition. In the year 1917 the states of Michigan, Utah, Nebraska and New Mexico became "bone dry." The Supreme Court upheld the Webb-Kenyon law prohibiting shipments of liquor into dry states. Congress finally adopted a prohibition amendment to be submitted to the states. Through all of this, the great service of the press was to keep uppermost in the minds of the people the necessity for prohibition to conserve grain and alcohol during the war. No amount of influence on the part of the big liquor interests could offset the facts daily published broadcast. In this matter the newspapers and the pulpit were the deciding factors. By them a willing public guided its action on one of the most important questions of the day.

Not only were the people required to make this sacrifice, but they were constantly appealed to for contributions to war charities. Every cause, no matter how worthy, depended upon the press to reach the public. How well this medium recognized and rose to the occasion was shown by the surprisingly ready results. Yet all the great sums which were contributed solely because of this publicity imposed upon the newspaper a heavy responsibility. It was its duty to see that every penny collected through its agency should go to the purpose for which it was intended. The editors of the country were keenly alive to their new obligation and scanned carefully every charity to which they lent their aid.

In New York City as a direct result of the *World's* exposé of the \$71,457 Army and Navy Bazaar that netted \$754 the Board of Aldermen passed unanimously an ordinance placing all entertainments for charity other than those of religious and fraternal organizations under regulation of the Department of Licenses. The investigation started by the *World* unearthed a network of other enterprises such as the fake Russian Ambulance. Before the inquiries ceased, accounts of all charities had been gone over thoroughly, so that only the legitimate could survive and public confidence in them was firmly established.

In sharp contrast to the year before, in 1917 American citizens took almost as much interest in foreign affairs as in domestic, and some of the best newspaper work of the year was done in this field. Through the work of staff correspondents in the capitals of Europe, the press kept the reading and thinking people of the United States informed on the progress of the war through consistent publication of important feature articles, interviews with men of international fame, descriptions of battlefields, and exposures of diplomatic intrigues.

The most striking illustration of this last was the publication in the New York *Herald* and the later syndication of the so-called "Willy-Nicky correspondence." Of these Theodore Roosevelt wrote to the translator, Herman Bernstein:

I congratulate you on the noteworthy service you have rendered by the discovery and publication of these letters. They illustrate with a glare like a flashlight the dark places of the diplomacy in autocratic nations as it really is. . . . With these documents before them, no Americans who hereafter directly or indirectly support the Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns can claim to stand in good faith for human rights, equal justice, and the liberty of small, well-behaved nations. Let me repeat, my dear sir, that in publishing these letters you have rendered signal service to this nation and to all mankind.

Equally important with the task of keeping America in touch with foreign affairs was the task of keeping Americans abroad in touch with domestic affairs. The Chicago *Tribune* published a special war edition which it sent over to our soldiers. All American newspapers have cooperated in keeping the troops informed. They have sent special editions to the training camps, and newspaper men quartered there have assisted in getting out camp publications. The psychological effect of this in keeping up the spirits of the men should not be underestimated.

Just as the newspapers had a tremendous effect upon the war, so the war inevitably affected the newspapers. It has increased the cost of production and decreased the volume and also the revenue of advertising. The rise in cost of news print paper and the demand for a larger circulation has forced many dailies to put up their price. Even with this advance and with increased advertising rates, they have suffered losses over previous years. This has



been true in spite of the check set by the Federal Trade Commission on the advance in the price of white paper. To this difficulty was added the proposition to tax newspapers in new ways. The newspapers were ready cheerfully to pay their share, but they felt that this tax of five per cent. on the net income in addition to their other taxes was a flagrant injustice. Technically and financially it was the hardest year they had ever been called upon to weather, but through it all they gave freely of their energies and their valuable space in the performance of great services to the nation.

What these services were has already been pointed out. By hearty cooperation along definite lines, the press has made possible the efficient waging of the war to this stage. It has buoyed up public confidence in the business and financial world. Business has felt the encouragement of its substantial backing. In every field and in every sphere of activity it has aided the public and the nation. Nor was its support blind and unreasoning. On the contrary the support of the American press has been along broad lines of constructive criticism, intelligent appraisal, and fearless action. During our first year of participation in the war, its record has been something of which every American could be proud. It has been servant of the Administration, steward of the public interest, and yet its own master.

There were few national affairs not directly connected with the war which attracted the attention of the public during the year. All of them were inherited from the past, but all received new importance in 1917. They were all concerned with the safeguarding of democracy. In the Senate contest on cloture, a united press stood for the principles of free speech. It protested, too, against the injustice that would be inflicted yearly upon hundreds of

thousands by the passage of the literacy test. With like energy it gave wide publicity to the so-called "leak" to Wall Street, and continued its unrelenting fight against the "Pork Barrel." In a year monopolized by war the public character of this work should not go unnoticed. The course of the American newspaper in national affairs is so undeviating that its service is taken as a matter of course.

The important contributions of dailies in the United States were not limited to national affairs, but some of their most important work was done in purely local matters. This work was the vitalizing force in movements of politics, reform, health, and every civic and community advance.

Twenty-four hours after the murder of a policeman in the Fifth Ward of Philadelphia on primary day, the *North American* published an accusation of the mayor. The facts on which those accusations, which became a matter of court record, rest became known to the entire public through a detailed presentation of the testimony by the press. While the excitement was at its height it warned the Administration that any attempts to tamper with grand and petit juries would result in unrelenting exposure and persecution. Throughout the investigation of the circumstances of the killing, and the entire conduct of the trial, the press of Philadelphia prevented corruption, guaranteed justice, kept the people informed, and aided the authorities by bringing to light new details and new witnesses.

The municipal campaign of New York City, perhaps the most exciting and hotly contested in the history of the city, was greatly influenced by the newspapers. In its series "Who is John F. Hyland?" the *New York World* showed rare

resourcefulness, initiative and daring. At the same time, the Hearst papers dwelt on the merits of Mr. Hylan and pointed out the weaknesses in Mayor Mitchel's administration. In the contest between two different forms of publicity, the more popular won. The catch-phrase "Vanderbilt calls him Jack" and the back page cartoons of the *American* and *Journal* undoubtedly had more weight than the more seriously executed exposés in the *World*. This contest in which the newspapers of the city divided into two camps, all acting according to their own lights, and all putting every effort into the fight, illustrates the difficulties with which the press has to deal in its battle for the public welfare. It will take the impartiality of a historian to judge this municipal election, but at any rate the newspapers left no stone unturned to arouse the city to a realization of its duty.

There is little doubt that the election of Andrew J. Peters as Mayor of Boston was a triumph for the newspapers working in the best interests of the city. After a campaign cheapened by the candidates themselves, a decisive vote ended the Curley administration.

In countless other instances has the press kept a watchful eye over local politics. As a direct result of its publicity an investigation of the District Attorney's office in New York City was made early in the year. The so-called "West-Side Grab" was also the source of much comment. All the people of San Francisco were directly affected by the fight waged on the front pages of its dailies against the street railway and water companies. As a result, these public utilities were made responsive to public will. Constitutional amendments in Massachusetts were the occasion for a statewide educational campaign in the news columns.

A housecleaning social and political was achieved in the New Jersey State prison by the New York *Evening Post*. A reporter who wrote vividly what he had seen there led state officials to remedy outrageous conditions.

As a social factor, the newspaper was more than ever a force in the community. In a striking number of ways it made the life of the people better, safer, more cheerful. This was remarkably illustrated by activities set on foot during the year by a single New York daily, the *Evening Mail*. Its "Save-a-Home" campaign kept hundreds of families from the streets. Its movement to use the parks to transform New York from the "city of dreadful streets" brought the people to a realization of how they were sacrificing children in the congested districts of the East Side. Its exposés of the hoarding of milk by profiteers, and the selling of unsanitary milk saved the lives of thousands of babies. Its gift of advertising space and its appeal to employers won work for many men over forty-five. Its urgent plea found jobs for hundreds of Plattsburgers who would otherwise have been idle while awaiting assignment to service. Its page displays on the Gary system enlightened countless parents as to what that system really meant.

In safeguarding the health of a community the newspaper was one of the most potent influences. The Dallas *News* printed a constructive and informative health article every day. The nature of these articles and their effect on the public can be obtained from this typical title:

**TUBERCULOSIS CAUSED 169 DEATHS IN DALLAS  
IT CAN BE PREVENTED!**

Throughout the country local dailies maintained last year as every year summer camps for poor children. Such

papers as the Indianapolis *News* and the Hartford *Courant* gave wide publicity to appeals for support for the camps which they established. The hot summer months in a crowded city were made easier by free distribution of ice by the New York *Herald*. In St. Louis, the *Star* brought the price of milk to sixteen cents a quart and saved a million a year for the city. It threw all the weight of its influence into a plea for community milk distribution.

Realizing the deplorable condition of rural schools in the vicinity, the Atlanta *Constitution* made repeated and earnest pleas for taxation for that purpose and for the maintenance of an adequate educational system. The same paper carried on a vigorous campaign for transportation facilities between Atlanta and Camp Gordon. As a result of this movement the use of the tracks of the Southern Railroad and the promise of a double track trolley was won.

The newspapers of five cities were called upon in 1917 to handle the great religious revival of "Billy" Sunday. If in these five cities he won a single reform or accomplished a single good, newspaper help counted. They co-operated with him gladly, not only printing his sermons *verbatim*, but following his campaign with extended news reports, special articles and pictures. During the Boston campaign many New England papers planned and conducted special pilgrimages from their cities to the Tabernacle.

Civic pride and interest were greatly stimulated by such enterprise as that shown by the Dallas *News*, which conducted an unremitting campaign for the beautification and improvement of that city. The boosting of the Pacific Coast papers was also notable. This spirit, in the newspaper offices of the country, has been the core of community improvement and civic pride.

Standing now in 1918 we can look back with proper perspective upon the events of 1917. In this year of decisive action, when through unprecedented stress the newspaper was confronted with unique opportunities for service, it rose to the crisis, attained unity without uniformity, identified itself with national purpose, and in its columns originated the grim purpose of the American people. The most remarkable tribute to the press is the very fact that no one individual newspaper stands out above the others. On a single high standard of national service they joined forces, welding themselves into the dominating influence of the country. Nor did the usual necessary activities of the newspapers become lost. Over-shadowed by the war, they were nevertheless carried on consistently and forcefully.

We are entering upon our second year of war. We are facing a time full of perils and hardships. That the American press will bear its share of the burden, and carry on the work so well begun in the past year is natural and indubitable. When the forces of Liberty shall have brought the World War to a triumphant conclusion, the historian will find greater significance in no generalship or in no battle than in the share which the newspaper had in the victory of Democracy.

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